



EPISCIA: An Introduction

Episcia is a New World genus native to southern Mexico in the north and ranging south through Central America to Peru and Brazil in South America. The genus is comprised of creeping herbs which are stoloniferous in nature, i.e., producing stolons similar in habit to the strawberry plant. The genus is distributed in rainforest habitats and can be terrestrial (growing on the forest floor) or rupicolous (growing on rocks).

Episcias are principally grown for the large and varied range of colours and textures exhibited by their foliage. Although the genus contains only 9 species, extensive hybridization between the species *E. reptans*, *E. lilacina* and *E. cupreata* has resulted in hundreds of commercially available varieties and hybrids. Episcia blossom colours range from red, yellow and pink to blue and white.



E. 'Cleopatra'



CLASSIFICATION



Family: GESNERIACEAE
 Subfamily: GESNERIOIDEAE
 Tribe: EPISCIEAE
 Genus: EPISCIA
 Sub-genera: None
 No. of Species: 9
 Type Species: *Episcia reptans*, described by Karl Friedrich Phillip von Martius in 1829.

Distribution Range: Southern Mexico, Central America, Southward to Peru and Brazil.

Name Derivation: Greek (*episkios* = shaded).

Root Structure: Fibrous, and shallow rooted.

Growth Habit: Rosette, and stoloniferous.

Chromosome Count: 18



E. lilacina



E. 'Jinny Elbert'

CULTURAL REQUIREMENTS

Temperature: Warm growing - 70 to 90 degrees F; 20 to 30 degrees C.

Watering: Bottom, top or wick watering. Potting mixture must be kept constantly moist.

Light: Low light.

Humidity: 50 to 60 percent.

Fertilizer: Continuously with a regular non-urea based formulation, e.g., Dyna Gro 7-9-5.

Soil: Neutral, heading downward to slightly acid; pH=6 to 7; Basic Potting Mixture is appropriate.

Propagation: Asexually using crowns and stolons and sometimes leaves, or sexually (seed) through self or cross pollination. Hybrid plant material will only reproduce true using asexual propagation methods and techniques.



E. 'Ember Lace'